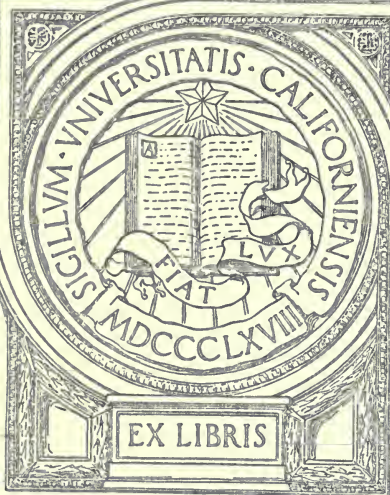


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**POEMS AND
PORTRAITS**

BOOKS BY DON MARQUIS

CRUISE OF THE JASPER B.

DANNY'S OWN STORY

DREAMS AND DUST

**HERMIONE AND HER LITTLE GROUP OF
SERIOUS THINKERS**

POEMS AND PORTRAITS

PREFACES (DECORATIONS BY TONY SARG)

THE OLD SOAK AND HAIL AND FAREWELL

POEMS AND PORTRAITS

BY
DON MARQUIS



GARDEN CITY, NEW YORK, TORONTO
DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & COMPANY
1922

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THE COUNTRY LIFE PRESS, GARDEN CITY, N. Y.

TO THE MEMORY OF
THE LATE
JOSEPH HITT

THIS BOOK
IS
DEDICATED

We used to say: "A poseur's trick!
For rhymes inscribed 'In Memory'
Mean just the rhymester's vanity" . . .
And would your eyebrow twitch at this,
With your old winsome raillery?

You taught me how to think: to see,
To fix the forms that to and fro
Across the mind's proscenium go;
You taught me how to write; 'tis not
Your fault I have not written so.

You taught me how to live; you showed ;
Defeat a mien that never quailed;
And with blithe lips that never paled
You flouted Pain. O Heart of Gold,
'Tis not your fault if I have failed!

You taught me how to die; when Death
Moved in between us, mute and grim,
You smiled and made a friend of him . . .
God grant to me a smile like yours
When the blurred day lessens and grows dim!

And should this seem a stark parade
Of such a bond as mine and thine,
Forgive this boastful heart of mine
That brags it to the crowd, because
I love our names to intertwine.

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AG 7 P6
1922
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POEMS AND
PORTRAITS



Poems and Portraits

A WOOD FIRE

I

THESE logs with drama and with dream
are rife;
Through all their golden Summers and
green Springs
With leaf and root they sucked the forest's
life,
Drank of its secret, deep, essential
things;
Its breathing hushes stirred of faery wings;
Its garnered fervours of a vanished day—
This sap shrills with the chant the cricket
flings
Across the hawthorn-scented dusks of
May,
Here on his firefly steed Puck mounts and
darts away.

II

But stir the fire and bid the fancies come!
Masques of a hundred lusk forgotten
Junes
Moving across the lit proscenium,
A hundred August nights and April
noons
Bringing their midwood moods and mystic
runes—
A quick life that the gross eye never
sees
Still briefly wakes beneath propitious
moons
For still the lovelier, elder deities
Through favoured forests pass in transient
pageantries.

III

'Twas by this burning log but yesteryear
The hooféd Pan lay couch'd with crafty
flute,
And through these shaken flames his song
I hear—
There, in yon hollow, snake and hornéd
brute

And ramping satyr gather, stricken mute,
With held glee waiting and withholden
shout
Until the music, rending heart and root,
Shall pluck the shag oak's red-lipp'd
secret out
And a brown Dryad wreathe herself into
their rout.

IV

But stir the fire and bid the dream be
fleet—
Blown hair of nymph that flashes, and
the drift
Of blowing petals tossed by flashing feet,
And leafy laughter rippling on from rift
To rift across the wood, torn vines that
lift
Their brambled jealousy to stay the
race—
Ah, through the forest's heart its blood runs
swift!
And all the amorous Summer's fiery
grace
Leaps in the following faun, glows in the
panting chase.

V

Or Druid visions mingle with the Greek,
And in the flames a paler flame I see,
Where spectral priests in coiled procession
seek
The consenting forest's midmost se-
crecy—
Vague shades amid its shadowy mystery—
Then priests and altars down the tum-
bling air
Are driven like fogs across an autumn lea,
And this that was a goddess's whorled
hair
Is smoke again, and but the single flame is
there.

VI

'Tis rather in some dream's obliquity
That we see Beauty, seldom face to
face. . . .
Sometimes the embers of antiquity,
Fanned of thought's pinions, glow a
little space,
Hinting of that old world's lyric grace,

Then gleam and vision tremble and are
gone . . .
But stir the fire! The forest in this place
Unlocks its heart of many a dusk and
dawn
And golden moon reprieved from oblivion.

VII

Nay, 'tis these transient and most fragile
things,
Forever dying, that can never die!
The gleams that shimmer off their passing
wings
When jocund gods go luminously by
Pierce to his spirit through the watcher's
eye
And in its texture shine perpetual.
One ageless beauty through eternity,
Creating creeds that rise and reign and
fall,
Dies into life again and triumphs over all.



THE PARADOX

'Tis evanescence that endures;
The loveliness that dies the soonest has the
 longest life. . . .
The rainbow is a momentary thing,
The afterglows are ashes while we gaze,
And those soft flames of song
That burn amid the hushes of the May
Expire before the sense can fix them. . . .
And motes of moonlight steal across the
 tender dusk,
And faery flutings wander from the
 haunted hills,
And tremble, and are gone. . . .
All bloom and fire,
All light and colour, scent and sound—
And passion, which is kin to these—
Die almost in the instant of their
 birth. . . .
They die, and yet they live forever,

For by their very poignance they are thrust
Deeper into the texture of that eternal stuff
Which is the soul,
And grow to unity with it; and there
The loveliness which dies the soonest
always lives.

THE MYSTIC

HAVE I not known the sky and sea
Put on a look as hushed and stilled
As if some ancient prophecy
Drew on to be fulfilled?

And would it be so strange a thing,
Among the rainy hills of Spring,
A veritable god to see
In luminous reality?
To see him pass, as bursts of sun
Pass over the valleys and are gone?

Have I not seen the candid street
Grow secret in the blaze of noon,
Swaying before the Paraclete
Who weaves its being through his rune?

And would it be too strange to say
I see a dead man come this way?
Like mist the houses shrink and swell,

Like blood the highways throb and beat,
The sapless stones beneath my feet
Turn foliate with miracle;
And from the crowd my dead men come,
Fragrant with youth . . . and living
 mirth
Moves lips and eyes that once were dumb
And blinded in the charnel earth.

*And I have dwelt with Presences
Behind the veils of Time and Place,
And hearkened to the silences
That guard the courts of grace,
And I have dared the Distances
Where the red planets race—
And I have seen that Near and Far
And God and Man and Avatar
And Life and Death but one thing are—
And I have seen this wingless world
Curst with impermanence and whirled
Like dust across the Summer swirled,
And I have seen this world a star
All wonderful in Space !*

A GHOST SPEAKS

WHERE life flows hottest
There I wade in the warm tide,
Feeding;
And I shall not vanish utterly,
I shall not yield and be dispersed in the
 mists of unconsciousness
While I feed on blood,
While I dip myself into the fluid of man's
 being.

I did so love my body
And the wide noon!
I was clad in a garment that was lovely,
In a form that stood solid,
I was a shape that made a shadow
And my flesh glowed in the sunlight . . .

But now I do not love the winds
That weave their patterns on the loom of
 space,
For I am less than they . . .

I drift, I am less than starlight
If I cannot clutch your heart
And drink from it . . .

I waver, I am less than blown cloud
If I cannot lay myself against your brain
And throb with its rhythms . . .

Ah, let me mingle with the human heat of
 you that still have form!
Let me sting again with the sharp brine of
 life
And go swooning down in the sea, sink
 drowning in the deep sea of love.

Give to me but only a little, only a little of
 your life! . . .

I shall scarcely blur your lamplight.
You shall scarcely know me from the smoke
 curling on your hearth . . .

When I coil among your nerves,
When I float through your veins,
You shall be shaken, you shall feel my
 presence
For a moment only . . .

When I lie in the fat marrow of your
 passions
Sucking up their power
You shall feel me strange and alien there
For an instant, but an instant only . . .

Give me your feasts;
Give me your fellowship
And the good smell of spilled wine,
I shall scarcely cloud the glasses . . .

Let me glide along the gleaming beauty of
 your hair,
You shall feel it lifted, you shall feel it
 stirred and moving for a moment . . .

Give me your laughter,
To play through it as shadows tumble down
 a waterfall;
And you shall feel me in your laughter
Only as a little ache,
An ache of causeless pathos at the core of
 mirth . . .

Give me your eyes,
Let me thread your vision,
And you shall know it only by a sudden
 fleeting wonder
Passing over the face of familiar
 things . . .
Let me, for a little while,
Have but a fold of your many-coloured
 cloak of life!

For I have loved this earth,
Its rocks and its grasses and its flesh . . .
I have stood solid on its solid hills, a sil-
 houette against the dawn,
I have made a black shadow at noon,
And I have held wonderful women in mine
 arms under the passionate stars—
And still I thirst, I thirst, I thirst for life!
And for a little while
Before I am lost among the mists,
For yet a little while,
I shall have my moments of being,
Drinking of your blood!

HEIR AND SERF

I SAY that I think for myself, but what is
this Self of mine

But a chance, loose knot in the skein of life
where myriad selves entwine?

One of my fathers died for a faith,

Another one him betrayed,

And hacked at his neck with a bigot's
blade . . .

Here, in the house of my being, wraith
battles with clutching wraith . . .

I say that I go alone, but I do not go alone:
Quivers my heart with hatreds not mine
own,

And an alien madness crawls in my
brain . . .

For wrongs that I never wrought I must
still atone,

Blood money I pay for them that I have
not slain . . .

Dust that was flesh of mine moulders in
many a tomb,
Ghosts that were sires of mine circle me
here in the gloom.

I have heard cries through the night in a
tongue I cannot speak,
And they knocked on my heart and
blanched my cheek . . .

I have dreamed dreams of a temple I cannot name,

Perchance it was Bel that dwelt therein,
apparelled in gold and flame . . .

Which is my life the more?—this visible
life that seems,

Or the hours when I drift at the whim of a
shade through the hurrying bourne of
dreams?

Through cities I never saw, a slave among
sullen slaves,

I am scourged with knotted whips . . .

Cairns I have raised in an unknown land
over mine own white bones . . .

Seas that I never sailed fawn with their
leaping waves,

Hailing me fellow with bitter lips,
Promising prey to the beaks of my lean,
swift ships . . .

Runes that I cannot read, I have graven
on Druid stones . . .
Omens rush on me out of the blown sea
mist,
Flash with the wheeling gulls, call to my
blood and are gone . . .
Music I half remember the wind carries by,
and I follow,
Flushed, to a tryst . . .
And I have stood shaken and glad, I have
trembled and turned to the dawn,
Crying out to Apollo.

I say that I choose for myself, but that is
an idle boast,
For here in my house of being ghost is at
war with ghost . . .
Old loves and hates at the core of me, old
doubts and faiths in the brain,
And salt in the stinging blood of me old
lusts revive again . . .

I say that I am myself, but what is this
Self of mine

But a knot in the tangled skein of things
where chance and chance combine?

A GENTLEMAN OF FIFTY SOLILO- QUIZES

I

SOME ten or twelve old friends of yours and
mine,

If we spoke truly, are not friends at all,
They never were. That accident divine,
A friendship, not so often may befall!

But as the dull years pass with dragging
feet

Within them waxes, in us wanes, esteem;
For weakly, and half conscious of deceit,
We gave them cause an equal love to
dream.

Could we have told some fool with haggard
face

Who bared his soul, so sure we'd under-
stand,
His little tragedy was commonplace? . . .
We lied. We stretched to him a broth-
er's hand;

A Gentleman of Fifty Soliloquizes 19

He loved us for it, and mere ruth has kept
Our jaws from yawning while he drooled
and wept.

II

The valour cold to be ourselves we lack;
And so from strands of kindness miscon-
strued
And lenient moments, careless threads and
slack,
We're meshed within a web of habitude.

And often these are worthier men than we;
But that itself, in time, becomes offense;
We're burdened with this damned nobility
That's forced on us, which we must re-
compense.

We loathe ourselves for being insincere,
And lavish generous deeds to hide the
fact:
For who could wound these hearts? Thus
we appear
Thrice loyal friends in word and look and
act!

And golden lies with which we save them
 pain
But serve to make their true regard more
 fain.

III

Should chance strike out of me some human
 heat
 Leap not at that and think to grasp my
 soul!
I flee new bonds. My self must still re-
 treat
 Down devious ways to keep me free and
 whole.

✓ Give me your mind, and I will give you
 mine.
 Then should it change no heart will bleed
 or burn.
Give me your wits. I want no heart of
 thine.
 You'll ask too much of life-blood in re-
 turn.

A Gentleman of Fifty Soliloquizes 21

There was a golden lad in years long
gone. . . .

We twain together left the ways of men
And roamed the starry heights, the fields
of dawn,

In youth and gladness. This comes not
again.

Give me your mirth. It bores me when
you weep.

My loves you cannot touch. They're
buried deep.

BREATH

WE ARE the shaken slaves of Breath:
For logic leaves the race unstirred;
But cadence, and the vibrant word,
Are lords of life, are lords of death.

Not facts nor reasons absolute
May touch the crowd's composite soul,
But rhythm, and the drum's long roll,
The orator, the arrowy flute.

The gods mixed music with our clay . . .
Rune-giving Odin, Krishna, Pan,
Move in the running blood of man,
His tidal moods they mete and sway.

Song more endures than steel or stone . . .
Sandalled with magic syllables
We glide like shades through shadowy hells,
Or soar to heaven on a tone.

THE TOWERS OF MANHATTAN

ON THE middle arch of the bridge
I stood,
And mused, as the twilight failed—
The bridge that murmurs and sings,
Swinging between the tides and the skies
Like a harp that the sea winds sweep—
Night flooded in from the bay,
With billow on billow of shadow and
 beauty,
With wave upon wave
Of illusion and dusk,
And before me, apparelled in splendour,
Banded with loops of light,
Clothed on with purple and magic,
Rose the tall towers of Manhattan,
Wonderful under the stars.

Whence has this miracle sprung
To challenge the skies?
From the plinth of our girdled island,
Guarded by sentinel waters,

How has this glory arisen?
Whence is the faith,
What is the creed,
That has dowered the dumb brute rock and
the sullen iron
With a beauty so vital,
With a grace so vivid and real?
Whence the strong wings of this lyric that
soars like a song in stone?

For the builders
Builded in blindness;
Little they thought of the ultimate
Uses of beauty!
Little they kenned and nothing they recked
Of the raptures of conscious and masterful
art—
They builded as blind as the men who
raised
The naïvely blasphemous challenge of
Babel—
For they wrought in the sordid humour
Of greed
And the lust for power;
They wrought in the heat of the bitter
Battle for gold;

The Towers of Manhattan 25

And some of them ground men's lives for
their mortar,

Taking the conquerors' toll

From the veins and bones of the driven
millions—

Of curses and tears they builded,

Of cruelty and crime and sorrow—

And behold!

By a baffling magic

Is the work of these builders transmuted

To temples and towers that are crowned

With a glamour transcendent

That lifts up the heart like the smile of a god.

And how has this beauty sprung out of
greed?

The dust is the dust, and forever

Receiveth its own;

But the dreams of a man or a people

Forever survive—

These builders, their crimes and their
curses,

Their greed and their sordid endeavour,

Lie in the dust,

Dead in the dust,

But the vision, the dream and the glory

Remain.

Triumphantly over all
Rises the secret hope,
Rises the baffled illusion,
Rises the broken dream
That hid in the heart of the conquered,
That dwelt in the conqueror's breast—
By the side of each man as he laboured,
Unseen and unknown
Laboured his dream—

Now, eminent,
Fronting the morning,
Mysterious,
Clothed with the night,
Rises the crushed aspiration,
The unconscious and scarcely articulate
prayer,
Rises the faith forgotten,
Rises the spurned ideal,
Triumphs the god denied,
Conquers the creed betrayed,
Rises the broken spirit,
All flowering in visible, durable marvel of
stone and of steel,
Miraculous under the heavens,
Wonderful under the stars.

Mock at the gods if you will,
Even forget their existence,
But always they labour in secret
To bring to a sudden and golden achieve-
ment their subtle intentions—
And lo! from the dung a lily!
A temple out of the clay!
A city out of a rabble!
And behold
The strong hands of Manhattan
Mightily lifted up
And grasping the gold of the sunset
For a crown for her head!

“ONLY THY DUST . . .”

ONLY thy dust is here, thy dust . . .

But when chill May uncloses
Her petals and is June, I feel
A heartbeat shake the roses.

Earth and the sun were sweet to us,
Green grass and brooks and laugh-
ter . . .

And I cannot think of thee a ghost
Within some strange hereafter.

Dawn and the hills were glad of us,
Tossed corn and windy meadows . . .
And I should not know thee as a shade,
Pallid among pale shadows.

Stars and the streams were friends to us,
Clear skies and wintry weather . . .
And it was not wraith and wraith with us,
But flesh and blood together.

“Only Thy Dust . . .” 29

Only the dust of thee is here . . .

But when mine own day closes

I will lie down beside thee, love,

And mingle with thy roses.

PREMONITIONS

I

A FACE

I GOT one glimpse, across the heads of the
crowd,

Of his face. . . .

Hook-nosed, pock-marked, heavy-browed,
sneering, and bold,

And then the crowd shifted and the face
vanished. . . .

I never saw it before,

I never saw it afterward. . . .

But I will see it again, I know, in the hour
when Fate makes good her threats at
me,

In the hour to which the feet of my spirit
are drawn irresistibly,

In the hour which I have always felt and
known was coming. . . .

That face, with its menace and its sneer,
Will look on as I go to a supreme trial. . . .
It looked at me across the vague crowd
 with a warning and a threat,
It was an advertisement by Fate. . . .
It was the face of a devil, leering for a mo-
 ment out of the driving clouds of
 twilight,
Formed by a scrap of vapour,
And then suddenly dissolved.

II

THE MESSENGER

The hesitant feet of the rain
Falter along the street,
Falter and pause among the roofs and
 chimneys. . . .
The feet of the rain are fulfilled with a kind
 of irregular music,
They advance, they retreat. . . .
They are the feet of a Messenger who never
 gains courage to make his Message
 clear. . . .
He has paused on my roof a hundred times,
 this Messenger;

He draws near to my skylight on the out-
side, and I draw near to it within,
And it has seemed, a hundred times,
That I was about to envisage him,
That he was about to speak to me,
That out of the hurrying Chaos of life this
 Messenger was at last to speak to me
 one clear and poignant and compelling
 word;
But when I open the skylight he is
 gone;
There is a sob of wet wind among the
 chimneys,
There is a whirl and a swirl along the nigh
 roofs,
And he is gone. . . .
I know why he sobs, but does not speak,
I know why he retreats when I advance to
 question him,
I know why he dare not face me with the
 thing that he was sent to tell. . . .
I have always known! I have always
 known!
And when the catastrophe which is at the
 core of my being emerges into the
 realm of deeds, when it becomes my
 act, apparent to all men,

When I have completed myself and gone
into nothingness with one gesture,
I will go with the loud word ringing in my
ears that this Messenger has tried to
say a hundred times
But faltered over, sobbing.

III

HINTS

The wave comes rolling up the beach and
breaks upon the shingle,
With a hint for me in its gesture;
The shadow from wind-tumbled trees darts
at me across my moonlit path,
With a hint for me, an intimation;
Blown vapours beckon,
And gesturing flowers that strew the fields
of dawn,
They bid me to return—
I passed through their beings, once, to get
here,
And I will be part of them again—
They do not know the thing that holds me
in the body that I now inhabit,
The need that holds me here for yet a little
while,

The need for that one significant stroke,
for that one blind, violent, reckless
rush of the flesh-clothed soul

Which will fling me God knows where!

And which must be before I can lie down
and rest. . . .

Hourly I feel my being ripen to that rush
And to deliverance!

THE JESTERS

WE CANNOT help it, we are cursed
With an incorrigible mirth;—
Although we too have saddened with the
 clouds that shadow
The disconsolate Earth;
Although we too have mourned with all
 mankind the disillusion of the barren
 years;—
Although with all mankind we drink the
 acid tears;—
Although we too have stolen cowering
 through the nethermost
Dim crowded hells
Where in the common terror of doomed
 multitudes
The vague ghost cringes, huddling toward
 his neighbour ghost,
And each finds each the mirror of his sins;—
Although we too have sought beyond the
 outmost bounds of space
A god of our imaginings,
His will, his form, his face,
To sink again with baffled wings

For that we only found familiar riddles
there;
Still, in our ultimate
Numb moments of despair,
Still, in our desolate
Bowed anguish here beneath the whips of
fate,
Still, when we reach the dark way's darkest
end
And by the blind wall droop with none to
friend,
Then, of a sudden,
Some perverse humour shakes us, and we
laugh!
Some tricky thought will grip us, and we
laugh!
Some rebel mood will seize us, and we
laugh!
Ho, Jove! loose all your peevish lightnings
from the height,
And slay me, Jove!—but in the end some
brother clown
With desperate mirth will laugh your fool-
ish godhead down!

THOSE THAT COME BACK

I, too, have heard strange whispers, seen
A stealthy mist rise from the Summer's
 green,
And felt, even in the loud and candid noon,
A central silence and chill secrecy
Laid close against the human heat of me;
But never under sun nor moon,
Nor through the choked, ambiguous utter-
 ance of the rain,
Has any presence made his meaning
 plain . . .
Perhaps these ghosts are helpless ghosts
 and weak,
Or when they see us, grow too sad to speak.

SAPPHICS

LEAPS the little river
 and laughs at fetters,
Through the pebbled channel
 it flutes and flutters;—
Dances down the rapids
 where Autumn scatters
Gold on the waters.

Something bends the sedge
 and the rushes over,
Something moves and gleams
 where the grasses waver,—
Can it be a nymph
 that has taken cover,
Couched by the river?—

May it be a naiad
 with breasts that glimmer,
Chased of satyrs, dreading
 their hooféd clamour,
Finding strange delight
 in the fears that claim her,
Joy in the tremour?

Maybe Pan himself
 in the ferny hollow
Peels a wand and notches
 a pipe of willow,
Perks an ear and nods
 as he harks the mellow
Song of the shallow.

Who shall say 'twas only
 the leaves that glinted?—
Gods of eld survive;
 it is faith has fainted—
Some shall see forever
 the forests haunted,
Earth all enchanted;

Some shall heed the lyres
 in the winds that murmur,
Some shall see the Triton
 beneath the comber,
Some shall hear the loom
 of the pagan Summer
Weaving her glamour;

Hearing wings they dream:
 'Tis the mounting pigeon
Bearing Venus home
 to her own Ægean !
They are outcasts, strayed
 from a golden region,
Drunk on old legend.



THE FELLOWSHIP OF CAIAPHAS

THE fellowship of Caiaphas were of good
repute alway—

But Jesus tramped with beggar men and
broke the Sabbath day.

The fellowship of Caiaphas, respectable
were they!

But Jesus dined with publicans and He
broke the Sabbath day.

The fellowship of Caiaphas would moan as
they did pray,

But Jesus is a Human god and yearns to
see men gay;—

And He turned the water into wine one
jolly wedding day.

The fellowship of Caiaphas were very strict
alway,

But Jesus pardoned the harlot's sins—and
He broke the Sabbath day!

The fellowship of Caiaphas, what righteous
men were they!

Jesus they hanged between two thieves, for
He broke their Sabbath day.

They slew the Rebel that broke their laws
—what could they do but slay

This wistful vagabond whose love led men
the Happier Way?

—*And the fellowship of Caiaphas would slay
Him again to-day.*



✓

INHIBITION

I LIVE a hidden life unguessed,
A life of quaint, fantastic schemes;
I dwell with flushed, romantic dreams
And freakish humours unconfessed,

Though I can show the world a mien
As cold as any judge's mask . . .
(The judge, too, lives beyond his task
And traffics with a realm unseen.) . . .

Behind the placid front of use
The baffled whims move to and fro;
We fear to let these genii go,
Their wings grotesque we dare not loose,

But sober-faced in church or mart,
In office, street, or drawing-room,
We carry caged to the tomb,
The golden nonsense of the heart.

↓ A SONG IN SPRINGTIME

INEXORABLE Spring comes on to hunt me,
With all her aching ecstasy,
And sudden beauty like a javelin
Pierces the heart of me.

She spares me nothing, nothing of her
 laughter,
Her golden whim of daffodils,
Her calling and her singing down the
 valleys,
Her song among the hills.

Nothing she spares me, nothing of her
 rapture,
Her leaping brooks, her young things grow-
 ing,
Her seagulls plunging through the tides of
 sun
Out of the dayspring flowing.

A Song in Springtime 45

Years there have been when I could bear
the beauty

Of budding trees and flashing wings;

Now I am one with trodden leaves and
Autumn

And all old broken things.

THE HEART OF THE SWAMP

I

THE coiling creeks are dark and slow,
Are tortuous as the thoughts of men,
Unstable, twisting, black and slow;
But bright among the dragged ferns
The jewelled rattler basks and burns,
And dull along the water side
The stealthy moccasins abide,
And brood and glide and go.

II

The swamp, throughout the changing day,
Is changeling as the hearts of men,
It changes with the changeful day;
At morn the bayous stir and gleam
And strive to veil their evil dream . . .
They cloak their secret thought at
noon . . .
But midnights, underneath the moon,
Frank, monstrous moods have sway.

III

I crept that way through hovering mist
That wavered like the faith of men;
At moonrise, through the silver mist . . .
I heard an eddy whimpering there
As if some trapped thing in despair,
Dreading the vast, uncovered sky,
Were cowering in the reeds to die,
As I stole to that tryst.

IV

The moon her herded vapours drove
As helpless as the tribes of men,
Her herds of cloud she swayed and
drove . . .
But now she bends, unveils her face,
And peers and glitters on that place . . .
Her madness shook and searched me
through,
My soul turned fire and glittered, too,
On her that was my love.

V

The living vines I pushed apart
Caught at me with the hands of men
And clung to me . . . I flung apart

The flowering vines . . . I struck, in
scorn . . .

I stabbed again, for love forlorn
And trust betrayed and desolate . . .
But my third blow was edged with hate,
And hot, and to the heart.

VI

The swamp was still a little space . . .
Amidst a multitude of men,
A terror trembles for a space,
They see what God sees and are still . . .
The footless things that creep and pass
Lay still beside me in the grass . . .
The moon's long fingers, loose and chill,
Lay dead across her face.

VII

The swamp lay still, and then . . . a
sigh,
As when along the veins of men
The held blood wakens and they sigh . . .
A quickened sense of living things,
Of hidden eyes and stirring wings,
Envelops me; the ripples speak
With fed mouths down the charnel creek,
And monstrous shapes lurch by.

VIII

The bayou's dream I know, I see . . .

It cloaks it, as the skill of men
Cloaks moods their neighbours should not
see . . .

It veils its secret thought at noon,
But, underneath the tigerish moon,
Lies coiled and crouched to leap and
slay . . .

And evil things creep forth to play
As once they played with me.

“MARY, MARY, QUITE CONTRARY”

“*Mary, quite contrary,*

How does your garden grow?” . . .

From all your uplands airy

The winds that come and go

Among our vales below

An elfin chime are bringing

That rhymes with naught we know . . .

Or is it flowers a-singing?

Ah, whence the music, Mary,

That plagues the fancy so? . . .

The tunes that turn and vary,

Vague pipes that breathe and blow,

Far bells that clash and throw

A sound like silence ringing,

And voices faint and slow . . .

Or is it flowers a-singing?

Perchance when maids unwary

Went singing to and fro

You wove a web of faery

And charmed them, that they glow

“*Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary*” 51

Like roses in a row,—
With golden heads a-swinging
Where vocal waters flow . . .
Or is it flowers a-singing?

Sweet magic must you strow
To set your gardens springing
With pretty maids, I trow . . .
Or is it flowers a-singing?



THE TOM-CAT

AT MIDNIGHT in the alley

A Tom-cat comes to wail,
And he chants the hate of a million years
As he swings his snaky tail.

Malevolent, bony, brindled,
Tiger and devil and bard,
His eyes are coals from the middle of Hell
And his heart is black and hard.

He twists and crouches and capers
And bares his curved sharp claws,
And he sings to the stars of the jungle
nights
Ere cities were, or laws.

Beast from a world primeval,
He and his leaping clan,
When the blotched red moon leers over the
roofs
Give voice to their scorn of man.

He will lie on a rug to-morrow
And lick his silky fur,
And veil the brute in his yellow eyes
And play he's tame, and purr.

But at midnight in the alley
He will crouch again and wail,
And beat the time for his demon's song
With the swing of his demon's tail.

BARR WYNNE

Do YE whiten with fear at the whine of the
wind?

Was it fancy that mingled a moan therein?
Did ye dream?—did ye wake?—when ye
saw my face?

Are ye feared of a dead man's face, Barr
) Wynne?

Barr Wynne, are ye there? Are ye there,
Barr Wynne,

Shaken, and brooding on me and your sin—
Are ye there, are ye there, are ye there,
Barr Wynne?

A ghost is the whim of a sick man's brain?
Then why need ye start and shiver so?
That's the sob and drip of a leaky drain?
But it sounds like another noise we know!
We know, Barr Wynne—and so did
Cain!—

How the heavy drops drummed red and
slow . . .

We know, we know, we know, Barr Wynne!

Souls there be that have passed in peace,
But I went forth in a whorl of hate . . .
There's a whisper would draw me hence,
did I heed,

But Heaven must wait, or Hell must wait,
Till I get my grip on your naked ghost
And drag ye along to the judgment gate!
Do ye hear?—it is I, it is I, Barr Wynne!

That was only a trick of the light on the
fog?

Then why should ye see my face therein?
There is naught to fear from a dead man's
hand?

Then why do ye shrink from my touch,
Barr Wynne?

The hour that I meet ye ghost to ghost,
Stripped of the flesh that ye skulk within,
Ye shall learn whether dead men hate, Barr
Wynne!

A METROPOLIS

To AND fro about the town
The dead men hurry up and down;

Whirling corpses, moving dust,
Driven of gold and greed and lust,

Filmy-eyed and gray of cheek,
How they babble, bite and squeak!

The sun above them, cloud-yclad,
Makes all the silver heavens glad,

The living winds shake from their wings
A sense of quick, immortal things,

The sea's mysterious passion beats
In rhythm through the troubled streets,

And down the virgin steepes of night
Like music falls the far moon's light;

But these are dead men, with no thought
Of things that are not sold or bought.

The words that move their gleaming lips—
(Bright the grave-damp glints and drips!)—

Are all of dross, are all of gold,
Are all of things they've bought and sold;

The lights that glisten in their eyes—
(Filmy-bright the grave-damp lies!)—

Dart and flicker, leap and toss,
At their tales of gain and loss.

Up and down and to and fro
In hurried crowds the dead men go,

They dance, they stamp each other down,
They fight and gibber through the town,

They flail dead legs and arms about,
They writhe and sway in ghastly rout,

Their dead feet trample everywhere,
Their dead mouths taint the holy air.

The living breezes wander by
Wing'd with a message from the sky,

The sun comes up, the sun goes down,
The dreaming moon slips past their town,

But these strange dead men take no
thought

Of things that are not sold or bought;

In their bodies there is breath,
But their souls are steeped in death.



“THERE ARE NO TRIVIAL
THINGS . . .”

THERE are no trivial things,
But those that seem so lack interpret-
ers . . .

There are no little things;
A blood-clot in a despot's brain
May change the gain of ages into loss
And plunge the hope of millions in des-
pair . . .

Some predestined strand of cobweb
May choke a burly empire to its death . . .
What things are little things?
How many an atom has outweighed a
planet in the scales of life!

Men and mosquitoes,
Comets, kings and whirling gnats and
moons,
Are all but cosmic dust that dances in the
winds of chance . . .

Or winds of fate,
Or you may say they're whirled by Purpose,
if that pleases you . . .

And if that Purpose is the word,
Then why may not the purpose of a solar
system

Sometimes be focussed in a cootie's bite?
I love to see some swollen, great and self-
important cause

Pivot upon a pinpoint!

Let us grow drunk with fancy; we shall see
Some epic tumble-bug that kicks not
merely globes of dung,

But a veritable world,

Adown the path it should, or should not,
go . . .

This universe is all one stuff,

And lest we mortals get too proud

And think we're made of special fine ma-
terial,

The just and merry gods

Will now and then rebuke the rank conceit
of humankind

By setting on some champion ant

To eat a city down . . .

THE YOUNG MOSES

THE world was at his feet . . .

But overhead, the stars!

From Luxor's roof he saw their light on
pillared Karnak fall,

And knew what gods and ghosts of mon-
archs

Alien to his blood

Kept guard among the shadows there . . .

While far upon the breathing plain

Hushed Memnon brooded, holding at his
heart

A golden cry that trembled for the
dawn . . .

Upon a temple's roof at Thebes the young
Moses stood

In commune with his dream . . .

A kingdom at his feet . . .

Fostered of Pharaoh's daughter,

And a Prince in Egypt:

In statecraft, priestcraft, lifecraft, skilled:

Wise in his youth, and strong, and conscious of his powers:

Dowered with the patience and the passion that are genius:

Ambitious, favoured, subtle, sure and swift—

Already Prince in Egypt!

And later, anything he willed . . .

Fledged early, with a soaring instinct in his wings.

He mused, and for an infinite moment

All the world streamed by him in a mist . . .

Cities and ships and nations,

Temples and armies, melted to a mist, and swirling past beneath the stars;

And a faint tumult filled his ears of trumpets and the clash of brazen arms,

The wind and sound of empire,

And he felt the mighty pulse of his own thought and will transmuted to the tread of marching hosts

That shook the granite hills,

And saw chained kings cringe by his chariots, lion-drawn . . .

And felt himself on Seti's throne and crowned with Seti's crown,

And all earth's rhythms beating to his sense
of law,

And half earth's purple blood, if so he
would, poured out to dye his robes
with deeper splendour . . .

And all the iron delight of power was
his . . .

This Egypt was a weapon to his hand;
This life was buoyant air, and his the
eagle's plume.

For one measureless moment this vision
moved and glittered,

Rushing by . . .

Master of men he knew himself; he thrilled;
There was an empire at his feet.

But overhead, a God . . .

Implacable divinity that, as he looked, was
of a sudden manifest

In all the burning stars . . .

Relentless, searching spirit,

Cruel holiness that smote him with the
agony of love,

Stern sweetness piercing to the soul,

Silence articulate that turned the universe
to one unspoken word,

Violent serenity that plucked at his roots of
being . . .

And a voice that answered him before he
questioned it . . .

For one eternal instant Moses stood,
The cup of empire lifted to his lips,
And struggled with the God that is not, if
we are not He . . .

And then . . . descended from the
temple's roof,

And took his slow way through the shad-
owed town

Unto the quarter where an outcast people
and oppressed

Laboured beneath the lash

And put their lives and hopes into the
bricks because there was no straw,

And cast his lot in with those sickly slaves,
To lead them, if he might, from bond-
age . . .

A PRINCESS OF EGYPT

WHEN Death espoused her, she was
fair . . .

They made a bright mask of her face,
With gold upon it here and there,
Before they swathed and laid her low
Within her carven mummy-case,
Four thousand years ago.

She dwelt where Memnon sang the dawn
In fiercer, brighter, franker years,
Before the cautious world grew wan
With thought and self-consuming
fears . . .

Life, then, soared on a redder wing,
A cruel, less laggard, lewder thing . . .
Then, if a splendid dream of art
Stirred at some monarch's eager heart
He wrought it, lord-like, into stone;
A million men of baser clay,
A million slaves to lash and slay,
Was not too great a price to pay
If quick and bold his vision shone,
A marvel in the morning-glow,
Four thousand years ago.

She lies so still, so very still . . .
And yet, upon this woman's whim,
Her female and her regal will,
The tact and temper of her tongue,
"Tremendous trifles" may have hung . . .
So blurred, so buried, far away,
The life she loved and looked upon! . . .
And yet it was but yesterday
That from her palace roof at dawn,
Through rolling dust clouds red and dim,
She saw the chariots, lion-drawn,
And ranks of shaken spears go forth
To battle in the veiled North
Beyond the desert's rim . . .
Perchance some warrior below
Clanged farewell to her, watching so,
Four thousand years ago.

Upon a beating night of stars,
That pulsed and throbbed in purple space,
And struck pale flame along the bars
That ribbed and ridged the loitering Nile,
She listened (with her woman's smile)
While the young Moses, face to face,
In her, with God and mystery,
Groped for his nobler destiny,
Thrilled to the brooding Ghost above

Glamour and woman, stars and love,
Mounted beyond his man's desire,
(And yet because of her!) was stirred
To grasp and stammer brokenly
His first conception of that Word
Which Sinai later sealed with fire . . .
Perchance these lacquered ears first heard
The heart of human history! . . .
If so, I doubt she understood
That faint, first hint of brotherhood,
Or knew his dream, or cared to know,
Four thousand years ago.

Here lies she, like a lotos furled—
A petal hardened to a gem
That glimmers in Death's diadem—
Long dead! . . . But up and down
the world
May fly some swift and wingèd thought,
May walk some living word she wrought . . .
Nay, she herself, in other clay,
May pass through these dim aisles some
day!
May stand bemused beside this bier
The while a surmise, stumbling, blind,
Gropes through the chambers of her mind,
Till vague remembrance growing clear

Rings bell-like to her inner ear:

“This was my dust, that lieth here!”

And I . . . why should I dream and
rhyme,

And muse and murmur o'er her so? . . .

Was I some minstrel of her time

Who dared to love her and aspire,

Who died to compass his desire,

Four thousand years ago?

“I HAVE LOOKED INWARD . . .”

I

*I have looked inward and seen the world;
I have looked out upon the world
And shuddered
To behold myself.*

II

Through the antres of my brain
A loud wind rushed,
And it was black with witches
Shrieking in pursuit of . . . me.

III

In a hilly place,
In a bleak place among the hills,
In an old scarred country
Deep within my skull
I came upon a cairn . . .
Warily I went,
Breathlessly I withdrew;
I did not dare to wake the dead thought
buried there!

IV

There was a locked door
And I burst it open;
There was a strong gate
That kept me from a house
Built between the hills:—
A great house
Hanging above a canyon
In my brain,
Swaying as the thunderous pulses
Beat;—
I smashed the gate
And entered a hall of shadows;
Out of the twilight,
Out of the palpitant dusk
Two came to meet me:
My Father and my Son . . .
And they were I,
And I was both of them;—
There was a little cell
And I broke down the door.

V

Prometheus,
Prometheus hanging upon Caucasus,
Look at the visage

Of yonder vulture:
Is it not *thy* face,
Prometheus?

VI

There was a cry from the darkness.
It is some beast, I said;
It is not human,
It has nothing to do with me . . .
It is not human . . .
But suddenly
Without my volition
There leapt out of my throat
An answering cry,
And the thing out there in the darkness
Gave tongue once more.
These cries are not human ! I said:
They have all too much to do with me:
They are not human—
Why should my blood remember
The jungles and caverns
And the red beasts
That my brain forgets?

VII

Narcissus,
Did you think that love or life or death

Could show to Narcissus
Anything but Narcissus?
—We are each of us Brahma,
And Brahma is all of us.

VIII

I rose . . . I rose . . .
The wild raptures
And the beating wings of song
Were mine,
The sun,
The climbing flight
And the great fellowship of the stars . . .
I rose . . . I rose . . .
And when I was wearied
A cricket on a grass blade
Far above me piped:
Come up! Higher! Come up! Up!
Up here with Apollo and me!

IX

Pray to the gods,
For the gods are not
Unless we pray to them!

X

In a dream
I stood upon Olympus
And mocked Zeus . . .
He poised a bolt . . .
Do not fling the lightning,
Zeus, I said,
For if I should awake
From this dream
There would not be any Zeus !

XI

I was the avenger;
Hotly I chased my quarry
Through the thickets;
At the blind end of a ravine
The brute rocks penned him
And flung him back to me,
And with a sniffling sob
And writhen arms lifted to cover his face
He stood shaking,
Waiting the death he dared not envisage.
Into his sick entrails
I drove the broad blade . . .
And when he fell

I saw the upturned face;
It was mine own . . .
I was the avenger . . .

XII

The Biologist seeks God in a cell;
The Mathematician tries to find Him by
way of the Fourth Dimension;
The Philosopher searches with a formula;
The Artist strives to create Him in his own
image—
Blessed are the ignorant
Who do not know how to shut the gods out
With walls of learning!

THE AWAKENING

I

OUTWARD from the planets are blown the
fumes of thought,
And the breath of prayer drifts out and
makes a mist between the stars;

The void shall be void no longer,
And the caverns of infinity shall be fulfilled
of spirit;

For in the wilderness between the worlds a
sentience struggles to awaken,
Passions and ghosts and visions gather into
a Form.

The God that we have worshipped for a
million years begins to be,
And he whom we have prayed to creates
himself out of the stuff of our prayers.

His wings are still heavy with chaos,
And his pinions are holden down as with a
weight of slumber;

His face is ambiguous,
His countenance is uncertain behind the
veils of space;

He has not speech,
He has but only thunder for his voice;

But the mornings gather to shape his eye,
And the fire of many dawns has thrilled his
twilight with a prescience of vision.

II

From myriad altars a reek of incense,
And outward from the constellations there
leaps the flame of burning prophets;

There goes forth the breath of lovely purpose,
As a south wind bearing seeds over a meadow
it goes forth across the firmament;

There arises a dew from the bruised foreheads
of martyrs,
And the broken hearts of the just, of them
that have loved justice, are dissolved
into a bloody dew;

Out from the populated spheres a mist,
And from the peopled worlds a breeding fog:

And in the mist a God gathers unto Himself
Form, and apparels himself in Being,
For them that have desired a God create
him from the stuff of that desire.

III

In the nebular chasms there is a shaping
soul,
And a light begins to glow in the dark
abyss;

That which is to be draws to itself what has
been and what is,
He drinks up the hopes of them that were
as a sun sucks up water;

He builds himself out of the desperate faith
of them that have sought him,
And his face shall be wrought of the wish
to see his face.

Man has lifted his voice unto the hollow
sky and there was no answer but the
echo of his voice,
But out of many echoes there shall grow a
word.

There is a cry from the peaks of Caucasus,
From the throat of Prometheus a hoarse
shout of agony and courage and de-
fiance;

Answer, O you stars! and make reply, you
rushing worlds!

Have you not always chained your Titans
where the vultures scream about the
bloodied rocks?

Have you not thrust your beaks into the
livers of them that loved you?

There is a cry goes forth from all the stars,
The voice of rebels and great lovers;

Out of agonies and love shall God be made,
He is wrought of cries that meet between
the worlds,

Of seeking cries that have come forth from
the cruel spheres to find a God and be
stilled.

Answer, you populations,
And make reply, you planets that are red
in space:

Do not ten thousand broken Christs this
hour cry their despair?

Are not Golgothas shaken this hour and the
suns shamed?

Goes there not forth a manifold wailing of
them that cry,

“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

These cries have wandered out along the
waste places,

And these despairs have met in the wilderness of chaos,

And they have wrought a God;

For he builds himself of the passion of
martyrs,

And he is woven of the ecstasy of great
lovers,

And he is wrought of the anguish of them
that have greatly needed him.

AUGUST, 1914

BEER's good in summer time; and gin's not
bad,

Sufficiently fussed up with limes and stuff:
Shun usquebaugh unless your head is wood,
Your stomach tin and liver made of rubber.
But these days, for a first-class Jag, I
think . . .

Just merely *think* . . . or rather, lie
at length

And let blown fogs and fumes of thought go
whirling

Through my head. Read any paper now
And let your brain suck from its pages all
The vital essence of mankind at war,—

Breathe in the vapours reeking from the
race:

The moods of exaltation, madness, hate,
The sacrificial ecstasies, the prayers,
The blasphemies, the questions and the
faiths,

The pains, the holy joys, the agonies,—
Drink down a heady extract of man's soul
Newly distilled, and you'll be drunk
enough!

I squeezed the world and drank its juice
last night . . .

Filled me the cup of one day's life, and
guzzled,

Reeled, swooned, and slept, and woke a
god. . . .

Waked up as Jove, careless, lolling upon
Olympus, still half drunk and very pleased
To be immortal . . . gazing with a
look

Not all paternal on that Nectarine,
Young Hebe, twiddling with my beard the
while . . .

And presently presided at a council . . .

"Mars," said Minerva, telling tales,
"Has set the Earth to cutting throats
again!"

I knew it, but I loathe to be disturbed,
And so I answered, thundering snubbishly,
"The Earth, Minerva? Cutting throats,
you say?"

What is the Earth?—(*Hebe ! Some nectar,
quick !*)—

The Earth, Minerva? I would know its
face,

No doubt, were I to see it, for I never

Forget a face I've seen, but now I don't
Recall the name. . . . Hebe! the nectar,
girl!"

That should have been enough; it *would*
have been

For any one not vowed unto Reform;
But this Minerva is persistent—all
The sisterhood of Thinking Spinsters *are*
Persistent: myself, I never gave much time
To Thought: I thunder, order, am obeyed,
Or punish; that's enough; I loathe these
Thinkers!

I've seen a score of bright young avatars
Ruin their native worlds by subtle thinking,
And get themselves in trouble, too, to boot;
The gods should be too dignified to think;
It's Human Stuff, it should be left to men.

I thundered twice and told Minerva so.

"But, Oh!" she said, "Great Jove, that
planet bleeds!"

"There's nothing really very new in that;
It always has," I said. "These planets do,
I made them by the million, in my youth,
And flung them gleaming from my mountain
here,

Bright spheres of fire that whistled as they
burned

And whirled, streaking the black abyss
with spirit,

And presently they wove red patterns
In the void and settled into ordered paths
And all their humming turned into a hymn
Of praise for me . . . which bored me
after while. . . .

The heat they caught from my immortal
hand

Went out of them in time, and as they
cooled

Small bits broke off and got them legs and
heads

And strutted up and down and mimicked
me.

Then rose the question in each star: *Which*
bits

That strut are most like Jove? And so
tribes fought.

They've fought on ever since. I let them
fight.

At times I've rather recommended peace,
But aye some subtle thinker shows a reason
For fighting on . . . not that I listen
much

To human reasons . . . I'm above all
that;

Their reasons tire me worse than all their
wars,

And their petitions mostly tire me, too—

And so I pet and coddle none of them!

I am above all that. . . . I do not
doubt

That by the time those planets cool so much

They've lost their taste for fight they'll also
lose

Their taste for life; and life and fight,
together

Dying out, will leave the peace of frost . . .

“A thousand little moons are that way
now,

I've heard. . . . No doubt, on those
same moons, before

They died and so got done with war and
thought,

They really had decided by their wars

Which tribe was most like Jove . . .
so demi-gods

And mammoths lie together now beneath

Their glacial seas . . . well, moons are
moons, and suns

Are suns! . . . I cannot die and I get
tired

Of things. . . . I let them fight . . .
don't worry me

With details! I'm above all that . . .
Hebe!

The nectar, girl! . . . and don't blame
Mars . . . *Hebe!* . . .

He's only what they make him . . .
the matter's squarely

Up to that small star called Earth, itself—
Whichever one that is. . . . It wants
to fight,

And so it fights; and so I let it fight. . . .

I've always tried to be an Easy Boss . . .

A god should always be a gentleman,

Serene, and not too harsh . . . the
council stands

Adjourned . . .”

FRANCE

THY thousand follies pass, and leave thee
stern,

Thy hundred madnesses have left thee
sane;

Rememberest thou old crimes and kings,
and turn

To save a world from tyranny again . . .
I love mine own land first, all lands above,
But after that, O France, I love

That quick and angry grace of thine,
The calm, poised, noble soul of thee,
That keen, scarred face, that vivid face of
thine,

The head, the heart, the whole of thee!
—1915

IN THE BARRED ZONE

GULL, in your flashing beauty,
White in a world of blue,
Whence is the darting humour,
Gull, in the wings of you?

*I am wild with the brightness of wayward
Gleams from the bright, wide skies,
And I wheel down the blinding waters
Seeking for dead, bright eyes.*

—1916

THE LAUGHTER OF THE ENGLISH

ENGLAND, we know thee better now!

Unuttered all thy sorrow,
Thy humour wears the stern day out
And mocks the grim to-morrow.

For while the world said: *Let none smile,
There is no mirth, hereafter!*
The "golden lads" of Shakespeare's land
Outfaced their doom with laughter.

We guess what inward throes must shake
The stout heart still unbroken,
What griefs lie in the silent deeps,
What agonies unspoken,

But all the world hears is the quip
That flouts at panic rumour,
Where toff and cockney carry on
In high intrepid humour.

Simple and subtle is thy mood—
Not honouring Fritz to hate him!
Leaving him puzzled at thy jests,
The scorn wherewith ye rate him.

The Laughter of the English 89

England, we know thee better now!

Through all the years hereafter

Shall thy name, England, ring for us

A chime of valiant laughter!

—1917

WE HAVE BEEN SLOW TO WRATH

*We have been slow to wrath: we shall endure
Unto the end. There is a God: and so the
end is sure !*

Now is the Beast the Polish madman saw,
Mad as his prophet, loosed against all lands;
His swinging mace is all he knows of Law,
His Creed dwells in his mauling hands . . .
With shag flanks caked of slime and shame,
And lolling tongue, but new-articulate,
Hoarse with his hymns of hate,
From his primeval caves and wallows came
This Beast to challenge Fate.

This Beast we know, whom time brings to
this last re-birth:
Bull-thewed, iron-boned, cold-eyed and
strong as Earth . . .
As Earth, who spawned and lessoned him,
Yielded her earthly secrets, gave him girth,
Armoured the skull and braced the heavy
limb—

We Have Been Slow to Wrath 91

Who frowned above him, proud and grim,
While he sucked from her salty dugs the
 lore
Of fire and steel and stone and war:
She taught brute facts, brute might, but
 not the worth
Of spirit, honour, and clean mirth . . .
His shape is Man, his mood is Dinosaur.

*Up from the wild, red welter of the Past
Foaming he comes: let this rush be his last!*

He seems to conquer, treading down
The garnered treasure of the arduous years,
Assails the spiritual temples builded up
Of sacrifice and saintly tears,
Defiling altar, fane, and holy cup:
Triumph from Time he seems to wrest—
The age turn pleistocene again at his be-
 hest—
And Truth seems for the moment over-
 thrown;—

*God! make us a spear against his breast
To pierce the heart, to split the bone!*

We have been slow as doom! Our dead
Of yesteryear lie on the ocean's bed—
We have denied each pleading ghost—
We have been slow: God, make us sure!
We have been slow! Grant we endure
Unto the uttermost, the uttermost!

*Did our slow mood, O God, with Thine
accord?*

*Then weld our diverse millions, Lord,
Into one single, swinging sword! . . .*

Our easy years fall from us now, a cloak
Of no defence; and all the sum
Of trivial things whirls off as smoke:
Our day of trial has come.
We that refused to sacrifice
Our ease to vigils Liberty demands
Shall learn this year of that refusal's price:
We that would suffer naught must suffer
thrice
For that we failed to forge us warrior
brands—

*But even so, but even so,
We shall be steadfast: even though
The red months stretch to years of woe.*

*We shall be steadfast:
Peace no more can be
Until from land and sea
Passes the shadow of this tyranny.
Now, God, we join Thy host !
We have been blind; but even so
We see Thee now, and now we fight for Thee,
Unto the uttermost, the uttermost !*

*Make us, against this Beast, a sword:
This is Thy battle, Lord !*

—1917

THE MILLS

I

THE mills of the East and the West are
loud with whirring bands,
The great wheels turn with the power of a
million harnessed horse;
The roar of a thousand forges throbs out to
the trampled lands,
The huge trip-hammers fall with the might
of a myriad hands,
And they who have held by force shall get
their fill of force!
Beat, beat, hammers, beat;
Justice comes, slow or fleet!
Swing, hammers, clang and beat,
Till the metal glows again,
And they that have shed our children's
blood
Shall meet our armèd men!

II

When the word on our lips was peace we
were stricken across the lips;—

Weld us the stabbing blade and prove us
the dreadnaught's plate!

Forge our souls in the bitter guns and our
mood in the eager ships,

That a people speak in the shell and leap
with the cruiser's keel,

That dreams may be armoured with deed
and fists be knuckled with fate!

At the white-hot forge of the North, at the
forge of the flaming South,

Clash, hammers, crash and beat!

Justice comes, slow or fleet—

Beat, beat, hammers, beat,

Till the iron hills reel!

The word in our mouth was peace, but
they smote us across the mouth

And now the word is steel!

—1918

FOCH

Twice only or thrice has he spoken,
But we feel him,
We thrill to him,
Wake to the sense of his fibre and stature . . .
Not words from his mouth,
But out of his brain the pulsations
Whirling the gathered storm on,
In vast leaping rhythms of cannon and steel . . .
We were waiting,
We listened,
And now our hearts tell us:
Here is the hurricane-wielder !
Wrist and fist that can brandish the lightning !
After doubts, after darkness,
Emerges the Man!

Comes forth the Man . . .
And France, once again,
Once again as of old, mighty mother and
 free,
Saves the world;
For out of her body and spirit
She brings forth a Son and a Sword!
—1918

SAVAGE PORTRAITS

SAVAGE PORTRAITS

M'CORKLE

I

M'CORKLE has a long, white, pitted nose
Which somehow seems the index of his soul;
He talks down it like this: "*Man's final goal
Is higher than materialists suppose!*"

Himself, he hints, is ever in the throes
Of some grim struggle for his Self's control.
M'Corkle lies. He never fought. Speech
is his rôle.

He's putty, and his holiness all gloze.

And when M'Corkle dies his flabby ghost,
By that uncertain, pale proboscis led,
Will maunder feebly on to Satan's House;
And when it melts, his diabolic host
(Disliking insects 'mongst his nobler dead)
Will send its gist back here to be a louse.

TOOD

II

TOOD is a skipping, wartish kind of pest,
Pun-Hawker, Smirker, Smut-Wit, Wags'
Review;

His tricky eyes flick dubious quips at you;
Sometimes his manner brags: "But at my
best

I rise above the scandalous, timely jest——
My taste is known: I've written sonnets,
too!"

One thrust of silence runs him through and
through;

He hates, and stings, for thoughts of him
half-guessed.

One night Tood dreamed he was not popular;
It frightened him; he spent the fortnight
after

That ghastly trance in flight from bar to
bar,

Cadging from friend to friend to beg their
laughter——

Then, reassured, took up again his trade,
Biting when safe and fawning when afraid.

FROGGLES

III

HE KNOWS celebrities . . . or else he
lies . . .

They share with him their tears, their chaff;

HE KNEW CELEBRITIES: his epitaph

Let that line be, when busy Froggles dies.

He tells you how Ben Actor dreaded fat,

He knows the oaths that Bishop Pulpit
swore,

He tells you what the late Dick Author
wore—

He has, indeed, a valet's eye for that.

He says Tom Bluff is losing out through
drink . . .

Poor Tom, he's such a clever fellow, too!

To look at What's-his-name you wouldn't
think

That he took drugs . . . alas! dear
man, 'tis true!

He knew Bill Blank before success had
come;

He might tell tales . . . but no, his
lips are dumb!

FROGGLES

IV

EACH dead man Froggles calls by his first
name;

The living, too—provided they're not by.
Professing to defend, he spreads a lie,
Affects to cherish, while he smears, their
fame.

He's rather strong on Matrimonial Stuff—
He's been the Whistles' guest, and seen
their life,

And so he scarcely blames Jack Whistle's
wife . . .

One sees these smash-ups coming, plain
enough!

HE KNEW CELEBRITIES . . . OR DID
HE LIE?

They'll carve that line some summer after-
noon

Upon a stone beneath the careless sky.

Myself, I rather hope they'll carve it
soon . . .

Small matter, though; for every pest you
slay

Ten more rank flies pollute the breath of day.

MISS HIGGS

V

MISS HIGGS is fair, and not long since was
young,

But she is unsuccessful in her loves;

I used to wonder (till I saw her gloves)

Was failure due to her too facile tongue?

And then—I saw her gloves! Unto them
clung

Brave strips of white, as snow in April
groves;

One time, no doubt, they both were white
as doves . . .

A sudden notion left me quite un-
strung. . . .

I wondered if . . . I wondered if . . .
but, no!

Her nails are clean, her face is fresh and fair,

A daintier ear than hers I never saw——

Let not the impish fancy to and fro

Scamper where suitor swains would
scarcely dare;

I'd rather think those gloves her *only* flaw.

THE GOOGS

VI

“PRECIOUS!” says Mrs. Goog. And,
“Love!” cries he,

And smacks his liar’s lips against her face.

“Sweet Dove!”—and then they clinch in
close embrace.

He’s thirty-one, and she’s turned fifty-three;
She makes him pet her when there’s company.

“My Angel!” “Little Wife!”—and all men
trace

The hatred crawling through his forced
grimace;

Some day he’ll kill her to be rich and free.

If I am on Goog’s jury then, he’ll hang;
I know just how he trapped the love-
starved hag;

True, *she* caught *him* with coins that clinked
and rang . . .

But he—I’ve heard that saffron cheese-
rind brag!—

“My own, my Dove!” “Come, kiss me,
precious pet!”—

Kiss her, you crook; it is your life-work:
Sweat!

PHYLLIDA

VII

PHYLLIDA's young—but skilled in self-control;

Phyllida's fair—of that Phyllida's sure;

Phyllida's pure—notoriously pure;

Phyllida's wise—when snaring men's her goal;

Phyllida's innocent — when that's her rôle;

With deft and silken craft, occult, obscure,

She makes her proven purity a lure;

Phyllida's virtuous, in all but soul!

Phyllida's always outraged when she's played

The very hell Phyllida planned to play.

I spoke the latest fool Phyllida's made:

"Were this," he mused, "a franker, elder day,

Long since some amorous dagger had carressed

The lovely hollow of Phyllida's breast!"

JANCE

VIII

JANCE gives two beggars, out of twenty,
dimes;

Buying thus cheap their tales of tragedy.

It gives him quite a sense of charity,

And notes for dull harangues about "the
times."

His coarse hands jangle crazy mental
chimes,

He strips tired failures to their souls with
glee.

An old souse steeped in lies and levity

Once, for a quarter, sold him seven crimes.

His theories might be harmful were he not
So great a bore that no one listens long.

He says: "I like to feel life strong and hot!"

But dullard Jance feels nothing hot or
strong.

The purse-lipped meddler merely has a
taste

For seeing new pains twist old human
waste.

GILK

IX

GILK is sincere. He lets no chance get by
To tell me so, and I've no doubt he is.
Deceit moulds not nor moves that osseous
 phiz,
Nor ever fancy lights that opaque eye:
No bone, unhelped of brain, creates a lie.
Saints fall, and stars; erratic comets whiz
Through space; but that dead rectitude of
 his
Will never fail till mummies chirp and fly.

Such virtue blights my nature worse than
 crime—
Gilk makes me long to scream and plunge
 in sin!
I'd sooner writhe, outcast of Hope and
 Time,
Brain-sick, midst nether Hell's most im-
 pious din,
Than sit and hold Gilk's hand beside the
 throne,
A fellow-angel to that godly bone!

DICK

X

DICK is a handsome, merry, primrose youth;
His special gift is making women pay
For his promotions. In Jack Churchill's
day
They did it crudely. Dick has far less ruth,
Cold blood, more caution and less brains,
forsooth!
He's flashing eyes and teeth, yet none could
say
That Dick was feminine in any way;
Among his charming friends is not . . .
the Truth.

Dick is discreet, and Dick is bound to rise;
He draws ten thousand now, aged twenty-
eight . . .
And yet: I've seen in several women's eyes
A dawning wish to play the rôle of Fate,
And what they built aforetime, tear
apart . . .
Kill quite, or leave unbruised, a woman's
heart!

BROWBER

XI

EACH time I've dined at Browber's "little
flat"

He's wheezed and joked about "Conjoogal
Strife";

Browber's convinced that 'tis a subject rife
With wit; above his cheeks of sallow fat
His bulged and yellowish eyes assure you
that.

(His wife laughs too!) What jollier quip
in life

Than this pretending that one beats one's
wife! . . .

As Browber drools he'll reach and tweak
the cat.

Keen Browber knows his guests will know
that none

Would frivol so unless he lived in bliss,
And often when their idiot mirth is done
His loving spouse and he exchange a kiss—
One night when they were striving thus to
charm

I saw a bruise upon the poor jade's arm!

PENK

XII

WHAT Penk could not have done, his
friends can't think!

If he'd stop dissipating (say his friends)
He still might use great means to famous
ends . . .

One gift he surely has, that none may
blink:

He coins a pinchbeck halo into drink
And from false glamour wrings wet divi-
dends,

Hinting, that for his past to do amends,
He'll make the startled future gasp and
wink.

Penk dares not sober up, but craftily
Stays drunk lest life should put him to the
proof . . .

What starts these strange tales of ability .
In dolts who've held themselves from work
aloof?

This one's the prince, the king, of might-
have-beens,
And might have been twice nothing, were
he twins.

ADELE

XIII

me
ADELE is gayly anecdotal of
The whims and eccentricities of friends.
“Don’t think from what I’ve said,” her
story ends,
“That Sue’s not *sweet*! She is! A per-
fect *love*!”

Making a dove of Sue, she soils the dove,
Assumes attack and speciously defends,
Plants little lispng doubts and still pre-
tends
She loves that girl all lovely girls above.

Behind Adele’s white teeth her pretty
tongue

Lies coiled to strike without a warning
hiss:

She smiles upon the victim newest stung
And marks the next for poison with a
kiss;

When Death breaks up her shell (for Life’s
sweet sake!)

The heart will wriggle from the breast, a
snake.

FUTH

XIV

OF FUTH I write— O Muse, make light
my touch!—

Lighten my mood, O Muse! for but a
breath

Would crush his wings and whirl him down
to death:

Of Futh I write, I write of nothing much,
And write too much of nothing, writing
such!

*Why, therefore, write of Futh at all (one saith)
Since gnat-wise round thy head he fluttereth,
Eluding still thy clumsier phrase and clutch?*

I answer, then, I know not why I write . . .
He bothers me . . . I will not tell you
why!

'Tis not in malice, surely, nor in spite:
I've spared him when I've picked him from
mine eye

Five times, and when my face with toil was
wet

I've plucked him back from drowning in
my sweat.

DIRK

XV

DIRK gleams and twists sarcastic lips about
An epigram he's never uttered yet—
A mordant word! Edg'd phrase none
might forget,
A spoken knife, did he but flash it out!
We wait for it! Applaud, almost, or shout,
Or wince beforehand, at that epithet:—
It never comes. But fifty men I've met
Say Dirk is keen. 'Twere heresy to doubt!

Dirk glinted thus on me ten years or more
Ere yet he uttered, mantling with conceit,
His jest . . . poor ass! . . . I
glowered upon the floor,
Ashamed *for* him; I stared down at my feet:
Then laughed, for Dirk's soul twinkled in
his eyes,
Telling his world, "I am a wit, and wise!"

SANK

XVI

SANK is a sinless thing; a saintly clod
Wherein no seed of evil bides, nor germ
Of rank revolt awaits its sprouting term—
Why, therefore, should I be so moved to
 prod
And kick at him? For I, if I were God,
Could scarce resist to plague this Lowly
 Worm,
To lash this lumpish meekness, watch him
 squirm,
And bid his gums bleed when he kissed the
 rod.

I don't like cooking with the salt left out.
Had I a heaven, Sank should not get in
Unless he fought, or spiced his life with
 doubt,
Or cursed me once, or pulled one human sin
(Or conquered one!) or somehow lived and
 proved
He'd blood enough somewhere to make him
 loved.

MISS PRINGLE

XVII

IF YOU'RE so weak as to remark, "Miss
Pringle,

The day is fine," why, then, Miss Pringle
laughs;

At all the words of men Miss Pringle laughs.

If you should say, "There's Central Park,
Miss Pringle,"

Or else, "I'm bitten by a shark, Miss
Pringle!"

Or else, "Twice five is ten," Miss Pringle
laughs . . .

Shrill as a guinea-hen, Miss Pringle
laughs . . .

She laughed once when I said, "'Tis dark,
Miss Pringle."

At first I thought, "Poor pretty little ijit!
Some nervous malady has caused this habit;
Her throat, no doubt, is always on the
fidget,

Just as his twitchy nose perturbs a rabbit."
And then I saw her teeth, white, even,
small . . .

She has fine teeth, and nothing else at all.

POLTER

XVIII

FROM Polter's smirk I know his soul as well
As if I'd seen it in a stagnant pool:
A gray curled shred that wavers in such
cool
Dead slime as crawls and wrinkles 'neath
the swell
Of a blotched lizard's belly . . . a
tentacle
Wherewith some monster hidden deep and
dim
May cup and suck green poisons down to
him,
A charnel devil in his muddy hell.

For Polter is a kind of tube, a pipe,
A dribbling conduit through which slander
flows . . .
He has a loose mouth coloured like stewed
tripe
And a queer, dead-looking, 'pocked, and
pitted nose;—
Even on Sunday, when the plate he passes,
He sniffs salt scandal in the Bible classes.

DADE`

XIX

LOATHING this world of nettles, sin, and
grime,

Dade likewise loathes the thought of better-
ing

The unfortunate planet; *he'll* not fling

His virtue into any fight with crime.

Dade is so nice he itches all the time;

His moral hide's so very thin (poor thing!)

That all his contacts burn the man and
sting:—

He's like a boil that nears its golden prime.

When Dade goes up to Heaven—he will;
he's prayerful—

I trust no cruder saint will jolly him;

I trust the Lord will say: "Be very careful,

And don't shock Dade, you rough-necked
Cherubim!"

Lay him away in cotton wool, O God!

Eternally, as something rare and odd.

TESSIE SMITHERS

XX

TESSIE SMITHERS, *can't* you be discreet?
Lots of fellows take you places, Honey;
Lots of fellows blow a lot of money,
But . . . somehow, you don't get
 married, Sweet!
Tessie Smithers, why will you repeat
Funny stories just a bit *too* funny?
Mothers whisk the eligible Sonny
Fiercely out of harm's way when you meet!

Tessie Dear, I wish you did not *always*
Do so *many* things that aren't done!
Better sit some dances out in hallways,
Child, than shimmy when you have a
 bun!
I am sure naught's wrong, for all your
 paces,
But . . . 'tis *Mothers* rule the Marry-
 ing Races!

KURT

XXI

KURT is M. A., B. S. and Ph. D.

And speaks at dinners when the city's weal
Demands a gorge of fish and game and veal
Served with rich sauces of complacency;
Each year Kurt gets some other new degree
Which means more speeches, dinners, and a
deal

Of compliments that Kurt feels sure are
real . . .

His broadclothed, gurgitating dignity

Has scarce a flaw where spite may enter in
To jab the lordly rolling ribs of him
Or stab his brisket with a ribald pin . . .
On tides of Lard and Learning he shall
swim

Triumphant to his full life's stately close.
But last night, drowsing . . . Gawd!
. . . he picked his nose.

SNERL

XXII

You'd think Snerl's face would give the
man away:

His crawling lips, sneak's nose, and wolfish
ears,

Eye that confesses, dodges, lies, and leers—
And yet he finds new dupes from day to
day!

Snerl looks so false, we lenient asses say,
"What man could be as false as Snerl
appears?"

Snerl knows our weakness and for thirty
years
Has traded on such doubts and made them
pay.

We are so wishful to seem just! So apt
To silence instinct . . . so afraid to
hate!

We find ourselves continually trapped
By our own cowardly pseudo-charity—
Snerl sees all this and glows with inward
glee,
Grins till the wrinkles wreath his reptile
pate.

HERMIONE

XXIII

UPON the printed page, Hermione,
You sometimes flutter with a young thing's
grace;

But when one meets you living, face to face,
You wake a helpless rage, Hermione.
The futile strife you wage, Hermione,
In vacuous alertness writes its trace,
Which nothing short of slapping might
erase . . .

I could not slap an Age, Hermione,

Or pull an Epoch's ears, an Era spank:
You and your Time unto the gods I leave;
They will be rude enough to tweak and
yank

And shake your shoulder in its broidered
sleeve,

Chastise you, pretty fool, and set you
right . . .

I grin with acid teeth and stay polite.

THE QUINKS

XXIV

WHEN one calls on the Quinks they always
say:

“We’ve never quarreled, though we’ve
been wed ten years!”

And then they quarrel, with “loves” and
“pets” and “dears” . . .

“No, Dove!”—“Yes, Pet!”—“Sweetheart
will have her way!”

—“Pet played the ace!”—“No, Love, I
played the trey!”

If they would candidly slap mugs, pull ears,
Say “Brute!” cry “Fool!” let smiles be
frankly sneers,

The sickly air might clear some honest day.

“Don’t quarrel, Love!” says Pet, when
Love looks gingered

Up to fling some healthy human curse.

“Be sweet, my Pet!” says Love, when Pet
seems injured . . .

I can’t write what I feel: I’m coarse, when
terse;

But should Pet bounce a skillet off Love’s
sconce

I think they’d both be happier, for the nonce.

JARED MUDDLESNIG

XXV

POOR Jared Muddlesnig, I hear, is learned.
If so, I fear his learning must be wicked.
He is as ugly as if Fate had kickéd
The man in anger—swatted, smitten,
spurnéd!
Ah, surely Heaven would make no man so
dernéd,
Dodgasted humley—(flagrantly betrickéd
In novel blooms of ugliness, hand-pickéd)—
Unless the doom were infamously earned!

Nay, more than Jared's lineaments are
crookéd:
I saw his soul once as it leer'd and lookéd
Out of his eyes. He's all one piece, is
Jared!
Shaped in one shape, stained with the single
stain,
Body and soul each other's looks have
ta'en—
And both enough to make the devil scaréd!

KLUNG

XXVI

IN KLUNG I find no faults, nor great nor
small,

Except: *I find no faults nor flaws in Klung.*
The faultless accents of his faultless tongue
In faultless cadence rise and float and fall,
Charged with great thoughts acknowledged
truth by all.

A finished thing, unspecked of life, among
His sweating fellows loud of mood and
lung—

And yet, somehow, his presence casts a
pall.

Of Klung I dare to murmur nothing ill:

De mortuis nil nisi bonum still

Must stop one's mouth, and Klung is *very*
dead;

His body's self, a statue, should have room
As monument above an empty tomb,
Filled with the nothings he has done and
said.

MELISSA

XXVII

MELISSA lisps a little bit; I wis
Melissa wisses Lillith lisped like that!
Melissa, from her instep to her hat,
Is lithe and Lillith-like . . . or thinks
she is.

She is six Sirens and Semiramis,
Four Serpents, Phryne, and a Vampire Bat,
Two Cleopatras and a Leopard Cat,
And thinks the world is dizzy for her kiss.

She'd like to have you know she's danger-
ous

As Venus dressed décolleté in foam—
But, really, 'Lissy never wrecked a home,
And wouldn't if she could; the whole
damned fuss

Is just a literary kind of pose . . .
She writes, has bunions, and—Good God!
her Nose!

MISS KLINK

XXVIII

MISS KLINK affects a sprightly sympathy
With all one says; she gurgles, bobs and
winks

Eager response to what she thinks one
thinks;

Her mind and yours, she gasps and says,
agree . . .

Which so works on a person's mood that he
Will curse his gods because they are Miss
Klink's!

And as you curse, again she gasps and
blinks

And signals fellowship in subtlety.

Did honest kindness urge a genial sham,
Did real good-nature dwell behind her
smirk,

No one, perhaps, would give "a single
damn";

But no such instinct prompts her blunder-
ing work:

'Tis Calculation in her hard, small eye
Says: *Flatter him and use him bye and bye!*

SHUNK

XXIX

SHUNK boasts his independence every
Time we meet;—he'll "bend no pregnant
hinge"

(So he misquotes) to any Boss, nor cringe;
No lackey, he, to wear a livery.

Each day he makes his Boss turn shivery
With fright, then treats him to a singe.

Poor Boss of Shunk's! how he must twitch
and twinge,

Perpetually pale and quivery!

'Tis really wrong to use one's Boss so brutal!

The sad, scared things have feelings, too,
no doubt . . .

I told Shunk so, but all my pleas were futile:
He sneered and gestured with a phantom
knout . . .

The traits men like, but lack, are what they
brag:

This fool Shunk's spine is just a damp
dishrag.

FOTHERGIL FINCH

XXX

O FOTHERGIL! my Finchlet! Fothergil!
Walt Atom Whitman! let your trumpets
blare!

My Virile Parlour Bard! Sweet Curley-
Hair!

The world rolls in your verses like a pill,
My Cosmic Cutey! You gild worlds at
will

And gulp 'em down, Toy Titan, with an
air . . .

I trust, O chinless chunk of Camembert,
No envious wren will slay you with his bill.

My Water-Colour Revolutionist,
Smash up the stars and kick the moons to
hell!

You Cock of Chicken Lice! slap Jove his
wrist!

Ding-dong the welkin like a dinner bell!
Hey! watch your wing! Don't flutter in
my eye,

For if you do, I'll sink you, should I cry!

BOOND

XXXI

SQUAT-BODIED, heavy-jowl'd, red-dew-lapped, dull,

Boond's snorting speech is all of Money Kings.

Boond has the bulk, but lacks the brazen wings,

To look the curl'd, 'man-faced Chaldean bull.

When Croesus nods at Boond his heart brims full,

He boasts that nod with spuméd bellowings;

His hoof'd voice tramples down all couter things,

He brags and ramps and shakes his triple skull.

Caricature of Wealth, Boond's hell is this:

He wants the wit to garner wealth himself;

He'd sell his soul for pelf, and count it bliss,

But never had a soul to sell for pelf;

And still he bores the world with rumbling talk

How Dives flung him greeting in his walk.

PEDDER

XXXII

IF THIS base country had not cast off kings,
So Pedder's manner hints, he'd be an
 earl . . .

He talks of "Demos" and his thin lips
 curl . . .

A rumbled grace that speaks of courtlier
 things,

So Pedder fancies, round about him
 clings . . .

The swine of trade will never tread this
 pearl;

He does not toil; from churl to common
 churl

He makes his way with lordly borrowings.

His overcoat he flings on like a cloak,
He writes romantic verses . . . with
 a quill . . .

Once, when some ribald fellow dared to joke
Of the late Queen Bess he sobbed and cried,
 "Be still!"

Another time, caught drunk and unaware,
He showed me how one works a barber's
 chair.

THE SPINKS

XXXIII

DEAR Mrs. Spink has had so very many
Doctors! . . . a fact of which her
lord seems proud.

I've heard him urging in a jolly crowd:
"Tell them about that last big tumour,
Jenny!"

And Jenny lisps and tells, nor spares us any
Details . . . she tells us All! And
we sit bowed

And listen while Spink murmurs half aloud:
"Her stomach has cost me a pretty penny!"

And after dinner, with the coffee cup,
The Spinks perform a friendly fireside clinic
And she glows as her husband cuts her up,
And his the zest of any surgeon-cynic . . .
I never knew before, I sometimes think,
A woman half so well as Mrs. Spink.

SPOOD

XXXIV

SPOOD is a slight thing, lacking vital power;
He has wit's trick and manner, smack and
tone,

Wit's everything—excepting wit alone.
Adapting well the whimsey of the hour,
He's jealous still of men that can create;
Quick to pick up a current catch or phrase
He seeks applause by citing it with praise,
And what he cannot steal he'll imitate.

If Jones says this, or Smith or Brown says
that,

Subservient quotes, and gives a friendly
pat,

But as he quotes, a something in his air
Claims for himself of praise the lion's
share—

Still, if the quoted thing should fail to hit,
'Twas said by Jones or Brown, 'twas not
his wit!

THE END

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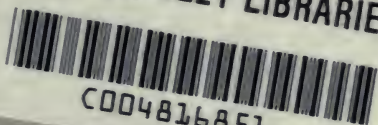
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